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BRIEFS

LIFEWAY RANKED AGAIN AS GOOD U.S. EMPLOYER

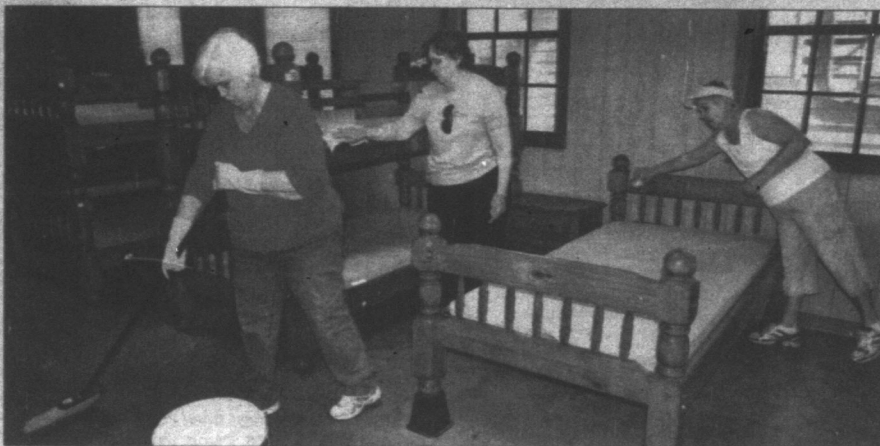
NASHVILLE (BP) — For the second year in a row, Southern Baptists' LifeWay Christian Resources publishing house in Nashville is ranked as one of the top 500 midsize employers in the U.S. by Forbes magazine. LifeWay landed at No. 196 on the America's Best Midsize Employers list. To determine the ranking, Forbes looked at how likely workers are to recommend their employer to someone else and how they feel about the other employers in their industry.

MOHLER: RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES IN CRISIS

WASHINGTON (BP) — The liberties enshrined in the U.S. Constitution are today "confused, contorted, and sometimes even condemned," said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., at the National Religious Broadcasters' First Amendment Lunch in Washington, D.C., on May 3. Religious liberty is viewed today by some as "problematic and out of date" and "injurious to human freedom, sexual liberty, transgender liberation and a host of new imperatives," he said. Mohler encouraged Christian leaders to hold on to the truths expressed in the Declaration of Independence and to defend these truths "that should be, but often are not, recognized as self-evident."

BGR SETS MISSION TO HELP VENEZUELANAS

VENEZUELA (BP) — Baptist Global Response (BGR) is organizing relief efforts to help starving families trapped in Venezuela's current economic crisis. The country's economic output is expected to shrink by 15% this year, which would be the third consecutive year it has decreased by double digits, Forbes.com reported. Inflation has reportedly grown from 112% in 2015 to 2,400% last year. In 2018, it's expected to hit five-digits. An outgrowth of the old Baptist Disaster Relief organization, BGR shares a partnership with Southern Baptists in meeting global human needs.



GETTING READY — Volunteers from North Oxford Church, Oxford, put the finishing touches on a cabin at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton. Among those from North Oxford Church sprucing up Cabin #1 on May 7 were (from left) Peggy Wallace, Beth King, and Dorothy Dowdy. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Garaywa: camp countdown begins

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Roddy Reed, long time manager of Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton, has encountered his share of challenges over the years preparing the Baptist-owned facility for a busy schedule of Christian summer camps for young girls.

However, until this year he never had the only road into the camp collapse on the morning of a major food delivery — a scant few weeks before Garaywa opens for those summer camps.

"For some reason, a drain culvert under the street picked today (May 7) to fall in on itself. Anytime now, we're expecting an eighteen-wheeler to come down that street packed with food that we can't do without," Reed said.

Fortunately, Reed was able to explain the gravity of the situation to Clinton city officials who immediately dispatched a virtual army of workers to quickly repair the surprise sinkhole and render the street passable again. The food delivery was made with time to spare, and the Garaywa staff was able to get back to work.

"We've uncovered the pool and are preparing the cabins. We're clearing the trails and testing the Ropes Course equipment. We're excited about this summer's schedule. When it starts, we want to be on 'cruise control,'" Reed said.

Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, owned by the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, is Mississippi Baptists' oldest campground and one of the two operating Baptist-owned statewide camps in the state. Central Hills Retreat near

see GARAYWA on p. 9

Retiring MC pres honored by school

CLINTON, Miss. (BP) — The naming of the medical science building at Mississippi College (MC) for retiring school president Lee Royce is among the gestures of gratitude for his 16 years at the helm of the Baptist-affiliated university in Clinton as he approaches retirement in late June.



ROYCE

Lettering for the Royce Medical Science Center was placed on the building May 1. For his wife, the Rhoda Royce Prayer Garden near Alumni Hall was named in her honor.

Several hundred people attended a farewell ceremony April 15 at First Church in Clinton. In attendance were Philip Gunn, a Clinton attorney, member of Morrison Heights Church in Clinton, and currently Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives; Clinton Mayor Phil Fisher; and state Sen. Hillman Frazier, whose district includes Clinton.

The ceremony was "a poignant reminder of the profound

see MC on p. 9

SWBTS trustees called to special meeting

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP and local reports) — The chairman of the Southwestern Seminary board of trustees has announced the board will hold a special called meeting on May 22, "[in] light of recent events."



PATTERSON

Board chairman Kevin Ueckert, lead pastor of First Church in Georgetown, Texas, did not mention specifics in his announcement but reported the special called meeting was requested by seminary president Paige Patterson.

The Ueckert announcement was prepared May 5 but embargoed until May 6 after worship services in many Southern

Baptist churches had drawn to a close on Sunday evening.

Patterson was swept up in controversy last week when an audiotape of an 18-year-old interview surfaced in which he espoused what critics are describing as an inappropriate and unbiblical approach to domestic abuse.

On the audiotape Patterson said, among other observations that upset some people, "It depends on the level of abuse to some degree. I have never in my ministry counseled that anybody seek a divorce, and I do think that's always wrong counsel."

In an interview with Baptist Press after the audiotape drew widespread attention in secular media and condemnation in social media, Patterson said, "I

do not apologize for my stand for the family and for seeking to mend a marriage through forgiveness rather than divorce. But I do greatly regret that the way I expressed that conviction has brought hurt. I also regret for my own family this deliberate misrepresentation of my position as well as the hatred that lies behind much of it."

Meanwhile, at least five Southern Baptist Convention entity presidents have made statements on domestic violence since the flap erupted over Patterson's comments. Three referenced Patterson by name but did not offer an opinion specifically on his comments. The others commented on domestic violence generally without naming Patterson.

see SWBTS on p. 11

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Five Percent Off!

I recently had occasion to visit one of the largest public universities in our state. As is my habit as an editor, I sought out a copy of the campus newspaper. In that campus newspaper I discovered an interesting self-contradiction that perfectly frames our plainly schizophrenic behavior toward one of the most dangerous threats to the long term well-being of the next generation of young Mississippians — our hope for the future.

On one page of this campus newspaper was a prominent advertisement for a local "wine and spirits" shop — a highbrow designation for what is commonly known as a liquor store. The ad featured three men, assumed to be the liquor store owners or just three happy customers, slyly smiling as they shoved bottles of alcoholic beverages into the foreground of the photograph by the necks of the bottles with a caption that read, "...students, alumni, faculty, and staff get 5% off every day!"

A couple of quick turns of the pages in this campus newspaper then revealed even larger ads for legal defense of a host of alcohol-related crimes. "Over 40 years of experience," shouted one local lawyer's ad in large, bold letters. "Defense of persons charged or arrested for DUI, public drunk, MIP, disorderly conduct, fake ID, resisting arrest... Appointments available seven days a week."

A second local attorney's ad offered expungement of criminal convictions and specifically lists "DUI defense," apparently as a specialty.

The most serious questions that first come to mind are, why are these merchants of death who engage in drug sales (yes, alcohol is a drug) allowed by this public university to advertise in a university-owned — and thereby state-owned — publication distributed primarily to underage students? Of the over 18,000 young people enrolled on that university's campuses, how many are legally entitled to purchase alcohol? (General answer: not many.)

To top off this outrage, students can enjoy a five percent dis-

count every day just like everyone else at this public university.

"Drinking at college has become a ritual that students often see as an integral part of their higher education experience," according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), an agency of the federal government's National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, another NIH agency, reports that almost 60% of college students engage in alcohol use at least once a month, and fully two-thirds of those students are binge drinkers who consume alcohol much more often than once a month.

NIAAA says researchers estimate that each year in the U.S. there are about 1,825 deaths, 696,000 assaults, and 97,000 sexual assaults from alcohol-related causes among the ranks of college students.

"In fact, college students have higher binge-drinking rates and a higher incidence of driving under the influence of alcohol than their non-college peers," NIAAA says.

There is at least one simple step that can be taken toward prevention of these serious problems, NIAAA says. "A major goal is to reduce the availability of alcohol, because research shows that reducing alcohol availability cuts consumption and harmful consequences on campuses..."

Yet, Mississippi's public university administrators as well as state leaders in the governorship and Legislature have, for as long as anyone can remember, turned a blind eye to the alcohol problems at every one of our public universities, as evidenced by their lack of reactions to alcohol advertisements in campus newspapers which inarguably lead to more alcohol problems including fatalities connected to our state's public universities.

Why do our leaders consistently and predictably condone the use and abuse of alcohol by our vulnerable young people? That would be a good question to ask the candidates next year — every one of them.

Rethinking immigrants

I have many memories from growing up in East Tennessee. On hot summer days my friends and I would walk to the local grocery store to buy soft serve ice cream cones. As I recall, it was the best ice cream ever. After buying our treats, we'd then walk over to a nearby house with the largest oak tree in town.

There we would sit in the shade eating our ice cream cones as we watched the world pass by. Actually, it was just cars and the people in them that we watched. I know it probably doesn't sound like much, but it was lots of fun for a boy from a small mountain town.

Before the Interstate Highway System was built and traffic began to bypass our small town, I remember seeing license plates from all over the country. It was a pretty big deal since most of my friends and I had never traveled outside the state of Tennessee. I dreamed of visiting those states one day. Living in a town with hardly any diversity, it's the only time I can remember seeing people I perceived as different from me.

How times have changed! Today, I look around and I don't just see people from other states, I see peoples from all over the world. They're not just passing through Tennessee. They're living here. In fact, they're living all across this great nation.

A study a few years ago titled *Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population* (Center for Immigration Studies, 2010) reported that immigrant population growth in 13 states was more than twice the national average of 28% over the previous decade:

- Alabama: 92%
- South Carolina: 88%
- Tennessee: 82%
- Arkansas: 79%
- Kentucky: 75%
- North Carolina: 67%
- South Dakota: 65%
- Georgia: 63%
- Indiana: 61%
- Nevada: 61%
- Delaware: 60%
- Virginia: 60%
- Oklahoma: 57%

Nine of those states are mainline Southern Baptist states. In case you haven't noticed, the face of North America is changing. The United States has become a modern crossroads of peoples from throughout the world. When it comes to spreading the Gospel, this is great news. You have the opportu-



Guest opinion

with Terry Sharp

nity to touch the world because the world is coming to you.

For years, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va., and other organizations have encouraged churches and individuals to go overseas to unreached peoples and places to share the Gospel with the billions who have yet to hear.

As Great Commission Christians, the call to go is ever important, but there's more.

Someone needs to go the airports and welcome the planes carrying the nations that God is sending to our cities and communities. We cannot miss the opportunities the Father is giving us, right in our own communities, by bringing the nations to be our neighbors.

As we love and disciple immigrants, refugees, and international students, the people who will return to their home countries permanently or to visit loved ones will, in turn, share the Gospel in places we've not been allowed to go — literally becoming a gateway for spreading the Gospel into those lands.

Has God already called your church to engage and disciple a particular people group? The people you're reaching overseas might not just live in their homeland. They could be your neighbors, work colleagues, and fellow students in your community. If they're there, it just makes good missiologic sense to engage the same people group locally that you're engaging globally.

Don't just sit and watch the world pass by you. The next time you encounter someone you perceive as different, ask yourself, "Why are they here?" It might just be so they can come to know Jesus.

Sharp (@terrysharpimb) is the International Mission Board's state and association network leader. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

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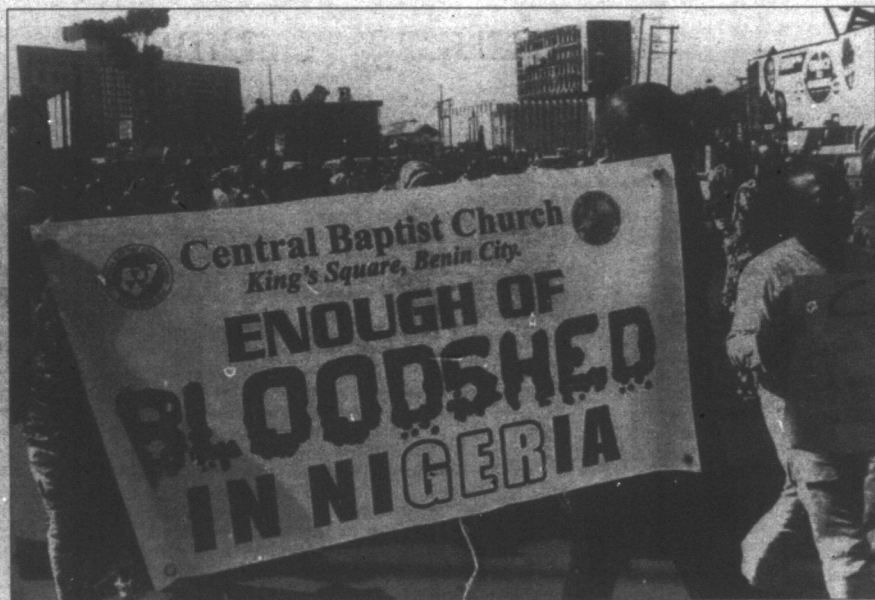
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STOP NOW — Nigerian Christians marched April 29 to protest attacks against Christians by Boko Haram terrorists and militant Fulani herdsmen, both Muslim extremist groups, with more protests planned. (Christian Association of Nigeria photo)

Nigerian Christians speaking out about Muslim atrocities

ABUJA, Nigeria (BP) — Nigerian Christians are peacefully protesting Muslim terrorist attacks as advocacy groups urge Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to protect the church.

Churches across the country responded to the call by Christian Association of Nigeria's (CAN) to peacefully protest April 29.

Protest marches with Christian songs and prayers preceded Buhari's April 30 meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. where advocacy groups hoped Trump would pressure Buhari to enact counterterrorism measures.

Among the most recent attacks on Christians in Nigeria, Fulani Muslim extremist herdsmen gunned down two priests and 17 worshipers at an early morning mass April 24 at St. Ignatius Church in Benue State.

The Fulani militants proceeded to raze more than 60 homes, along with destruction of farmland and food barns in Benue's Gwer East Local Government Area, World Watch Monitor reported.

Trump encouraged Buhari to enact widespread, peaceful solutions to the violence and to protect all people regardless of ethnicity or religion, according to press reports.

The dialogue was hopefully a beginning in bilateral cooperation to end violence from Boko Haram and militant Fulani herdsmen, Open Doors USA communications team editor Chris Summers told Baptist Press May 1.

"We want to make sure that there's some follow-through to those statements," Summers said. "We do want to see some concrete solutions from the Nigerian government" to particularly address "violence by Fulani militants in the middle belt of Nigeria," he said.

Open Doors will continue to advocate for an end to the violence, Summers promised.

In calling for nationwide protests in Nigeria, CAN accused Buhari of complacency and complicity in attacks that have killed hundreds of Christian farmers since late 2017.

"In the past few months, there have been Islamist insurgent attacks on Benue, Taraba, Plateau, Yobe, Borno, Nasarawa, Enugu, Imo, Abia, Rivers, Ogun and Oyo States," CAN General Secretary Musa Asake said at an April 27 press conference in Abuja.

"The Islamists and their agents have extended their trail of blood and destruction to Bwari in Abuja and Ilorin in Kwara State... All these were done with full security 'protection' as it were, for the attackers, according to eyewitnesses' report," he said.

Asake cited several isolated Fulani attacks following the killings at St. Ignatius Church, including the murder of 30 in Guma Local Government and the killing of 27 in Logo.

"War seems to be looming in Nigeria," Asake said. "Yet President Buhari, who was popularly elected in 2015, has not

seen the need and urgency to issue a presidential order... to halt the killings" or punish the perpetrators.

The Dark Age that has come with the Administration of President Buhari in Nigeria is giving the Christians in this country a huge concern," Asake said.

Protests were widespread, according to news reports, with rampant calls to vote against Buhari in nationwide elections in 2019.

"We all know, three years back, we all stood and voted this government to power with full understanding that they were going to calm the situation for all Nigerians, but the reverse is what we are seeing," a Jos pastor leading a group of protestors said in a video posted on CAN's website.

The group sang Move On To the Righteous Side before chanting and praying.

Boko Haram has killed more than 20,000 Christians and Muslims and displaced millions in the past 10 years, according to official counts, in an attempt to establish national Sharia law.

Militant Fulani herdsmen have joined Boko Haram in its violence in recent years, reportedly killing thousands.

Nigeria's population is nearly equally split between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims living predominantly in the north and Christians spread across the south, east and west, according to demographic studies.

Boy Scouts soon to welcome girls into scouting programs

IRVING, Texas (BP) — Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is striking gender from its Scouting program titles in 2019, ushering in the change with a "Scout Me In" campaign for Cub Scouts.

"Starting this summer, all kids are invited to say, 'Scout Me In,' as they join the fun, adventure, and character-building opportunities found in Cub Scouts," BSA said in a May 2 press release announcing the change. "Starting in February 2019, the name of the older youth program will be 'Scouts BSA,' and the name of our iconic organization will continue to be Boy Scouts of America."

Trail Life USA (TLUSA), a Christian alternative to Scouting birthed in 2013 as BSA moved toward acceptance of homosexual scouts and adult leaders, described BSA's transformation as a "lost journey into the woods of co-ed political correctness."

In 2017, TLUSA had 30,000 members in 750 troops spread across 48 states, but membership has "rapidly grown" in response to BSA's changes, TLUSA said in a May 2 press release.

"Well-intentioned as these kind of [BSA] moves may be, they are alarmingly all wrong," TLUSA CEO Mark Hancock said. "Confined to classroom settings more suited to girls, and denied rough-and-tumble experiences that help them learn and grow, it is no wonder 'boys are struggling.'"

The loss of such gender-specific environments leaves boys "losing out and not developing as strong, capable men because we are not letting them be fully boys," Hancock said. "Weakened expectations and participation trophies have led to our culture producing unproductive narcissists."

BSA's Scout Me In advertising campaign includes girls and boys, and is BSA's latest move to open its programming to girls as announced in October 2017. BSA began an evolution in 2013 that extended

scouting to homosexuals, and in 2015 opened leadership and employment to homosexuals and bisexuals.

"The Scout Me In campaign celebrates the BSA's expansion to serve families and welcome girls and boys into Scouting in communities across the country," BSA said. "It reinforces that the mission and core values in the Scout Oath and Scout Law are welcoming, inclusive, and foundational for both young men and women."

Since BSA opened Cub Scouts to girls, more than 3,000 girls have enrolled in the BSA's Early Adopter Program and are participating in Cub Scouts, BSA said in its press release.

Girls Scouts of the USA countered the BSA move with the blogpost, "No Contest: Girl Scouts is the BEST Leadership Organization for Girls" at blog.girlscouts.org.

"Girl Scouts is the premier leadership development organization for girls," the blog quoted Girl Scouts CEO Sylvia Acevedo as saying. "We are, and will remain, the first choice for girls and parents who want to provide their girls with opportunities to build new skills; explore STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and the outdoors; participate in community projects; and grow into happy, successful, and civically engaged adults."

Girl Scouts accepts transgender youth on a case-by-case basis, the organization announced in 2011.

BSA includes nearly 2.3 million youth members between the ages of five and 21, and about 960,000 volunteers in the U.S. and its territories, BSA said. Age qualifications for its programs are six to 10 for Cub Scouts, and 11-17 for Boy Scouts.

Girl Scouts has 1.8 million members and 800,000 volunteers, according to the Girl Scouts website. Its programs are open to youth in kindergarten through high school.



This letter is way overdue. My mom went to be with the Lord over 20 years ago. I should have written the letter 40 or 50 years ago, but I didn't. Nearly always, I gave her gifts and sometimes only got her a card at Mother's Day, but even then, when I did she would open it and read what I had given her and written and would, more often than not, shed tears and thank me. But I never sat down and wrote her a letter to say thank you.

We called my mother, "Mun." In fact, I thought everybody's mother was named Mun, but the older I got I realized that this was some kind of special designation just for my mother. There may be other Mun's, but I haven't run into many of them. We called her Mun because, as is typical, whatever the first child comes up with has a tendency to stick. My older brother at a very early age was unable to say mother and so in trying to pronounce mother he said "Munny," which later got shortened to Mun. Until her homegoing, she was always Mun to her family, to friends of the family, and to the church family where my father was serving as pastor and she served alongside him. She was known as Mun.

I wanted to write her and tell her this is a long overdue letter, but she knows that. What she doesn't know is that all of these thoughts have been swirling around in my heart and head all these years. This year I just want to go ahead and put pen to paper and send this previously unwritten letter to her and to all the wonderful, good, godly, Christian mothers that I've had the privilege of knowing through the years, but it's a letter directly to her. It's just a thank-you note that became elongated.

Mun, thank you ... for all the meals. My mom was a great cook. There were special dishes she would fix us on our birthdays that we wanted her to fix, but she could turn every meal into a special occasion. She could bake. She could cook country food. She could make the best biscuits on the planet. I know a lot of good cooks, but anytime we were going to be together she went out of her way and beyond the borders to make sure we had great food.



The Unwritten Letter to Mun

Because there were five boys in the family and my mom and dad, there were often seven or eight or ten or twelve folks who would be eating at the meal. She would fix for whoever and whatever the need was. Of course, I like many of you grew up in a day when there weren't restaurants and fast food outlets. Sometimes a fast food place for us was taking a piece of bread and smearing some mayonnaise on it and putting another piece with it, and we thought that was a sandwich. More often than not, we would have a breakfast and supper and if we were around at noon, there would be something at noon to eat. It was always good and plentiful.

When I say there was plenty of food, there was but you didn't always get some of the items that we might think were delicacies. One of the prize items in my family was when my mother fried chicken. She would nearly always cut up the chicken and there would be this one piece of delicious chicken that I never ever tasted because I was not one of the adults or one of the older boys, and it would be gobbled up by some other person. The wishbone was always a prize gift. I think I was grown before I figured out that everybody else was getting there before me, so I got closer to the front or closer to the plate where the pile of

chicken was and I experienced eating the wishbone. It still tastes good.

If you can imagine what life was like getting up and fixing breakfast for a husband and four or five boys who were going to be at the table, we could put away some food. I never ever remember leaving the table hungry. In fact, we were generally over full. Did I get up after every meal and thank her and tell her what a delicious meal it was? No. I think I did sometimes, but I know there were times when we would just gobble it down and take off. I look back and realize what an amazing effort that was — the production of the cuisine she put before us that blessed us, filled us, strengthened us, and sent us out into life. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Mun, thank you ... for mercy. The more I learn about mercy, the more I recognize that in a biblical sense it is God not doing to us what we deserve to have done to us. I think about all the mercy you extended to us — especially to my brothers who deserved to be reprimanded and sometimes punished — and how you held back and didn't treat them as they deserved to be treated. You extended mercy.

Mun, you know I was the worst of the bunch so whatever mercy meant to those other four boys, it means many

times over to me. Your love that showed through and your mercy that was extended to me gave me opportunity to be a different person, and you blessed me. Did I ever get a spanking growing up? I reckon I did, but I also remember the times you seemed to have forgotten to tell dad about me when he got home. I began to realize you were just being merciful to me. I have deserved some of the things that came my way that may have seemed to be punishment, but I thank God for your exhibitive mercy.

Mun, thank you ... for your marriage. It was a remarkable thing, because you didn't marry a preacher. You married a young guy who was going to be in business and then God called him to preach and he set off with you and, at the time, three of us boys and started preparing for ministry and preaching. You helped him get through his preparation and then worked with him in the churches he pastored. I think about how remarkable that was as you joined his call and became such a teammate in loving us, but also loving the folks in the church and the people of God. I know there had to be ups and downs in the marriage but you and dad faced them, overcame them, loved each other, and loved us.

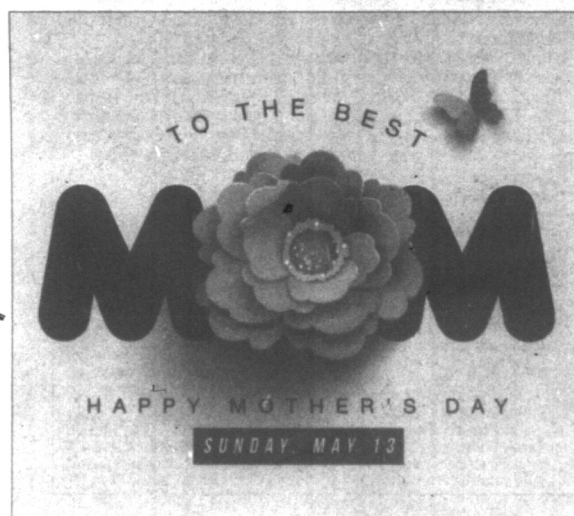
Finally, Mun, thank you ... for memory. When I say memory, I mean you and dad each had a great memory. Both of you had keen minds and your memories were sharp. I realize it took me a while to understand my memory in retaining information did not come from me but from you and him. It has blessed me all these years. If you make memory into memories, you begin to realize that I am also thankful for the extension of memory to be memories of you as you blessed us, provided for us, cared for us, prayed for us, loved us, and wanted the best for us.

I just wanted to write you this note and say it's been a while in getting to you, but thank you for all these precious things you have poured into my life.

Love,
Your son Jim

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

Honor the spiritual mothers in your life this Sunday



By Autumn Wall
Correspondent

Mother's Day is coming fast! Let me just say, my mom is literally the best just as you could same the same for yours. This coming Mother's Day is a great day to get to honor those who have loved and cared for us, teaching us to obey Jesus and love others.

There's another group of women we can also honor on this coming Sunday. The spiritual mothers in our lives have mentored us, poured their lives into us, and encouraged us toward Jesus even though we aren't biologically theirs.

For these women in your

life, here are a few fresh ideas on how you can honor them as well on this upcoming Mother's Day:

- Drop off a single flower at their home with a note attached saying, "Thanks for impacting my life!"
- Sit down and hand-write a letter listing the top 10 ways she has impacted you over the years.
- Call her and tell her how much you appreciate her. Make it personal and specific by recounting at least one thing she said or did that changed how you live your life as a result of her influence.
- Have a social media account? Tag her in a post honoring her for her input in your life.
- Personalize a gift with Scripture she has taught you with that was impactful. Put

the verse on a coffee cup, journal, photo frame, etc., as a reminder of her influence.

Scripture commands us to give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). Find a way to say thank you and make it really count for these amazing women who have invested in your life. Make your list today of who you will honor this Mother's Day alongside your own mom (who, I'm sure, is close to as awesome as mine is).

Autumn Wall (autumnwall.com) lives in Indianapolis and is an author, speaker, worship leader, pastor's wife, and mom of three. She is the co-author of *Across the Street and Around the World* (New Hope Publishers). Her commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.



I recently attended the MLK50 (Martin Luther King Anniversary) in Memphis, Tennessee. I did not agree with Martin Luther King on many issues of morality and theology, but I agree that racism in any form or fashion, from any source or in any situation, is a sin.

Racism sets up a terrible dichotomy. "Dichotomy" means literally to cut (temnein - in Greek) into two (dicha) parts. Racism "cuts" the human race into groups of human beings whom they say are not equal. At this point of wrong thinking and theology, the words "superior" and "inferior" enter into the conversation. The Bible says that every human being is made in the image of God. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27 KJV). "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God

created man, in the likeness of God made he him" (Genesis 5:1 KJV). Every human being has eternal value. There is no dichotomy in creation.

Some believe we lost the image of God in the fall of Adam and Eve. The Noahic Covenant is found in Genesis 9. This covenant is long after the Edenic and Adamic Covenants. And yet, Genesis 9:6 KJV says a murderer forfeits his own life because the human being he killed has the image of God. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." There should be no dichotomy in criminal justice or any other area of social or spiritual standing.

There is no dichotomy in

the Great Commission. The one imperative in the Greek is to make disciples of all human beings — not some, but all; not many, but every. Paul said the "eklesia" should not be a dichotomy of Jew and Gentile, but one body in Christ — this is the great mystery Paul preached on his missionary journeys and at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15).

Jesus died on the cross for every human being (unlimited atonement). He died on the cross for both thieves. Jesus "tasted death for every man," (check the Greek — very, very problematic for a view of limited atonement). "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory

and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9 KJV).

There is no dichotomy in Creation, the Commission, the Church, or at Calvary. There should be no RACIAL DICHOTOMY. Here is the irony of ironies. The speakers at MLK50 encouraged all of us to eliminate any RACIAL DICHOTOMY in our society and in His Kingdom — and we should. But some of those same speakers advocate a SPIRITUAL DICHOTOMY that is even more damaging to the Kingdom. There is no dichotomy in the Atonement. Jesus died for both thieves and would have saved both thieves. What everyone lost in the first Adam, everyone regains in the second Adam

(Romans 5:15-21).

Why replace a sinful dichotomy with a worse dichotomy. A holy God has nothing to do with either one. Many among us profess (accurately or ignorantly) a theology that sets up a terrible dichotomy. Maybe my IQ is lower than theirs; maybe I'm not smart enough to understand, but I still believe John 3:16, and "world" does not mean rocks, trees, and rivers; it means souls. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 KJV).

This word — DICHOTOMY — will cost us much more than \$5.

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at kdigby@christianaction.com.

BIBL iOClPHER

V XBO MOAXB VP XBO SGNBOY LVXB

VP XBO KGYMVZ RCM DCVKEOMQO VP

QVM! BVK WCYORSNBRLEO RSO BGY

FWMQZOCXY, RCM BGY, KRXY ARYX

PGCMGCQ VWX!

SVZRCY OEOUOC: XBGSTX-XBSOO

Clue: W = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans 8:9

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

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Revivals & Homecomings

► **Shady Grove Church, Panola County:** Revival, May 14 + 17, 7 p.m. nightly; Steve Parrish, speaker; Tim McMillen, pastor.

MS POSITIONS

EASTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH OF INDIANOLA IS RECEIVING RESUMES FOR A PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be emailed to williebetts2971@gmail.com or mailed to Eastwood Baptist Church P. O. Box 466 Indianola, MS 38751 ATTN: Music Search Committee.

UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Unity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 156, Moselle, MS 39459. Or you may email them to ubc.resumes@yahoo.com. Either should be designated as Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST CHURCH IN BROOKHAVEN, MS IS IN NEED OF A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER AND ALSO PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER. Contact Glenda at 601-786-3907.

HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH (SENATOBIA, MS) IS SEARCHING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC FOR A CONTEMPORARY SETTING. Submit resumes to: Pastor@HBCSENATOBIA.COM

BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH-INVERNESS, MS IS SEEKING A PASTOR. Send resume to Beulah Baptist Church P.O. Box 136, Inverness, MS 38753

Just for the Record



Preschoolers at **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, enjoyed making palm branches and learning about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.



TRINITY CHURCH, HERNANDO, burned the 15-year note on the addition and remodel of their building seven years early.



POPLAR SPRINGS CHURCH, MENDENHALL, celebrated a note burning Apr. 15 upon the payoff of their Family Life Center. Shown are pastor Ted Bowlin, Regira Shows, Howard Fewell, Buster Shows, Truman Cline, and Crystal Brewer.



CRAPE CREEK CHURCH, STEWART, ordained Brad Latham to the ministry Mar. 18. Roy Hawkins, Choctaw County AMD, is shown presenting Latham's ordination certificate.



FARMHAVEN CHURCH, CANTON, recently held a baby dedication.



Members from the **CARROLL-MONTGOMERY ASSOCIATION, WINONA**, under the direction of AMD Jim Pender, participated in a mission trip to Lifeline Connect Church, Hicksville, Oh., April 21 - 28. The group worked on building projects in the church's ministry building, painted a pool house at the park and made other repairs to the church, prayer walked, had a cookout for the public, and led in services at the church.



The youth of **GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, are shown keeping three miles of Highway 568 litter free.

SHILOH CHURCH, HOULKA, visited The Promised Land Journey exhibit in Collinsville. They viewed a representation of the Tabernacle, the tomb of Jesus, and a layout of what happened in the Holy Lands in different scenes in the Bible. For information on the Promised Land Journey, call (601) 986-8839 to set up an appointment.



CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT, hosted its first community fun day Apr. 21 with free games, bouncy houses, steaks cooked to order, fried fish, hamburgers, and hot dogs. Mike Burns, pastor.

Just for the Record



Several members from the Young at Heart group from **GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON**, traveled to Ocean Springs and Waveland touring the coast.



CENTER POINT CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, baptized four individuals Apr. 22. Shown are Tristan Williamson, Pauline Sandidge, Destiny Culotta, and Holly Hughes.

College News



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY Homecoming Queen Katelee Thomas (front) is pictured with the homecoming court (second row, from left) Lauren Welch, Savannah Smith (third row) Shelby Richardson, Alex Haney, Miss WCU Anna Sanford, (fourth row) Alexis Sumlin, Hope Thomas and Anna Swartzel.



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY inducted four alumni into the Hall of Fame during the annual banquet on April 20 at Southern Oaks House and Gardens in Hattiesburg. Pictured are inductees Gary Roberson (1986), Victoria King (2014) who received the Distinguished Young Alumnus Award, Price Harris (1964) and Don Biadog (1983).

Bible Drills



TUCKERS CROSSING CHURCH, LAUREL, recognizes its drillers. Children's leaders Carolyn, Kevin, and Abby Holifield and Bobbie Bridges; youth, Sharla Smith and Spring Walters. Eddie Bryant, pastor.



NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, MORTON, recognizes its 3rd - 6th grade drillers.



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB, recognizes its children and student drillers and leaders. The church also recognizes Katelynn Blackwell, who participated in the selection drill at First Church, Clinton Apr. 28 and went to the final round.



OAKHURST CHURCH, CLARKSDALE, recognizes its Bible drillers. Front row: Lucy Kate Johnson, Justin Elliot, Mackenzie Lee, Rachel Thornton, and Bryant Johnson; back row: Walker Starnes and Timothy Seely.



NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, TISHOMINGO ASSOCIATION, recognizes its state Bible drill participants: Evan Null, Gavin Null, and Shawn Henderson; Phyllis Murphy, Bible drill coordinator.

SBC Exec. Comm. opens nominations for president

NASHVILLE (BP) — Nominations are being accepted for president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee in Nashville, search committee chairman Steve Swofford announced May 2.

Swofford, pastor of First Church in Rockwall, Texas, said in a statement to Baptist Press:



SWOFFORD

"On behalf of the Executive Committee presidential search committee, I want to announce that we are accepting nominations for the next SBC Executive Committee president by e-mail at ECPresidentSearch@SBC.net.

"Following our election on April 17, the search team pledged to devote its first week to a time of focused prayer. Then last week, on April 24, I sent a letter to the Executive Committee members, SBC entity presidents,

executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, and state Baptist Convention executive directors asking them to share with us what they consider to be the five most important characteristics of the next President.

"We also asked them to pray for us as we seek to find the man God already has in mind for this strategic position.

"We have received many prayerful and insightful responses that will help guide us as we take the next step in our

search process. We also received many assurances of prayer. We are grateful for countless others who also are praying for us as we conduct this search."

In addition to Swofford, the six-member search committee includes:

■ Joe Knott, an attorney from Raleigh, N.C.

■ Adron Robinson, pastor of Hillcrest Church in Country Club Hills, IL.

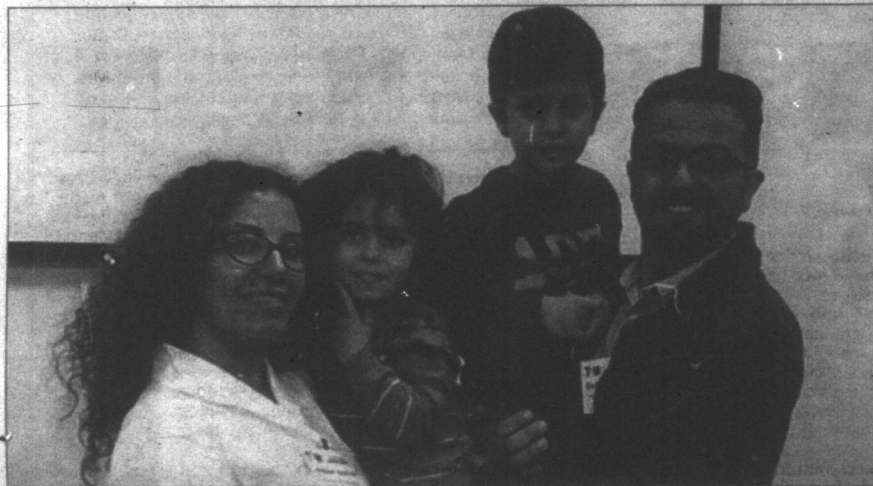
■ Stephen Rummage, Executive Committee chairman and

pastor of Bell Shoals Church in Brandon, FL.

■ Roland Slade, pastor of Meridian Church in El Ca,

■ Carol Yarber, a retired medical administrator from Athens, Texas.

The search committee was elected during a special meeting of the Executive Committee April 17 in Nashville, to begin the process of selecting a successor to Frank S. Page who announced his retirement March 27 after what he termed a "personal failure."



ALAJRABS

It was a tough road, but Alajrabs now resettled in the United States

FRANKLIN, Tenn. (BP) — Radwon and Asmaa Alajrab know what it's like to be homeless and lose everything they own.

The Syrian natives had to leave the country where they were born several years ago due to civil war. They went across the border and became refugees living in Jordan, but that was really a new beginning.

"I lost everything, but I gained what I needed most — Jesus Christ," Radwon Alajrab shared during an April 5 chapel service for the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board staff in Franklin, TN.

While at the refugee camp, the couple was introduced to several people who began building relationships with them. Those relationships led to getting to know Christians who were willing to pray with him "in the name of Jesus" and to help him and his family.

Through his new friends, Radwon was able to have 12 surgeries on his leg without cost to him or his family. During his recovery, he was given a Bible and began to read the Word of God daily.

"I accepted Christ and gave my

life to Him and was baptized in the Jordan River," Radwon said.

Fifteen days before he and his family were scheduled to leave Jordan, Radwon was told by doctors that he had colon cancer. Christian friends once again surrounded him and prayed with him "in the name of Jesus."

A few days later he went to the doctor for a followup visit and the doctor told him the cancer was gone.

"I did not believe him," Radwon said. He went to another doctor who gave him the same diagnosis — no cancer. "I didn't believe him either," Radwon laughed.

At the same time, the couple learned they had been cleared to settle in the United States. They noted the process normally takes two years, but they did it in 52 days. Asmaa Alajrab is convinced she knows the reason why.

While in Jordan they had to live a dual life. As former Muslims, they could not admit they were Christian or they faced being killed.

"We were secret believers in Jordan and this was difficult for us," she said. "We taught the Word of God in our house but we

could not say anything about Him outside our house. It was hard to live a dual life.

"When I began to pray that I didn't want to live as a secret believer, our trip to the United States opened quickly. Our lives changed because of God's love."

The couple and their children moved to the United States with the aid of World Relief. When asked where they wanted to settle, they gave no preference. "We left it to the Lord," Radwon said. "The Lord brought us here (to the Nashville area) and gave us this wonderful field to work in," he said.

After arriving in Nashville, the couple connected with Fady Al-Hagal, a former West Tennessee pastor who worked with World Relief and is now a part-time church planting specialist with the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB).

Al-Hagal is mentoring and discipling the couple, who have now been Christians for about five-and-a-half years.

The couple also connected with City Church Network, a Baptist-affiliated group in Nashville led by David Kaufmann.

Housing allowance in jeopardy during fed appeal process

WASHINGTON (BP) — Two Southern Baptist entities have urged a federal appeals court to uphold the constitutionality of the ministerial housing allowance.

GuideStone Financial Resources in Dallas and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville signed on to a friend-of-the-court brief filed April 26 that asks the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago to reverse a lower court decision invalidating the exemption.

The case is Gaylor v. Mnuchin. In October, U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb in Wisconsin ruled the allowance is an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment clause that prohibits a government establishment of religion. It is the second time in four years Crabb ruled against the allowance.

The Seventh Circuit, which overruled Crabb's original opinion in 2014, will decide on a section of a 1954 law that permits "ministers of the gospel" to exclude for federal income tax purposes a portion or all of their gross income as a housing allowance.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has interpreted "ministers of the gospel" to include leaders of other religious faiths. The church or church-related employer must designate the amount of the allowance for each pastor or leader.

The lawsuit does not affect the part of the law that enables tax-free use of a parsonage or other home owned by a church or other religious body.

GuideStone Financial Resources, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) health and financial benefits entity, is a member of the Church Alliance which filed the brief in the case. The alliance is a broad coalition of denominational pension programs that cover ministers

who qualify for the housing allowance.

"We have always felt that the cash housing allowance offers a level playing field, ensuring the government does not favor secular employers over churches or churches who provide their ministers a physical dwelling at the expense of those that do not," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said in a written statement for Baptist Press (BP).

GuideStone is still committed as a member of the Church Alliance and in unity with the other Southern Baptist entities "in advocating on behalf of pastors and other ministers eligible for the housing allowance," he said.

ERLC President Russell Moore said the entity he heads signed on to the Church Alliance's brief "for the sake of religious liberty, the freedom of the church, and also the flourishing of local communities."

"As the brief argues, leaving religions alone actually respects the separation of church and state," Moore told BP in written comments. "More still, eliminating the allowance would have the effect of penalizing thousands of small congregations and their leaders across the country."

"We will continue to fight to protect the housing allowance because we believe clergy are essential for flourishing, vibrant communities."

In the brief, the signers contend the housing allowance does not violate the First Amendment clause prohibiting a government establishment of religion. The provision permissibly accommodates religion by passing the U.S. Supreme Court's Lemon test, according to the brief.

That formula, presented in a 1971 opinion by the high court, said a law must have a secular purpose, not primarily promote or restrict religion, and "not foster an excessive entanglement with religion."

GARAYWA

cont. from p. 1

West is the other campground.

Camp Kittiwake in Biloxi, for many years the Royal Ambassadors campground, was destroyed by Hurricane Camille in 1969. Gulfshore Assembly, on Henderson Point outside Pass Christian, was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Jordan East is Garaywa's new camp director in charge of programming. She considers Williamsville Church in Attala Association to be her home church, but has special memories of all the churches pastored by her father.

"There's not going to be much time this summer to develop homesickness. We're going to keep our campers busy right up to 'lights out' every evening," she

said. "Thirty-six Cabin Leaders will have Bible study each day with the girls. We're bringing in missionaries to talk with the girls."

There will be activities designed to illustrate Bible truths. We will have an evening worship service.

"All of that is in addition to times of recreation, crafts, and other age-appropriate activities."

East also will be managing LIT - Leaders in Training. "We'll be training potential Cabin Leaders for the future," she said. "It's also a great opportunity for the staff to mature as Christians. We're going to teach them to witness. We're going to show them how to give their testimony. We're going to train them to use their spiritual strengths."

The goal: "We want every single girl who comes here this summer to learn about Jesus Christ and missions, and be able to go

back home and live out what they have learned," East said.

There's currently room in every week of the summer camps for additional girls, Reed pointed out. "We can accommodate 252 girls per week, for the six weeks of summer camp this year. That doesn't include the Day Camps," he said.

"We also want parents to know that security is in place, seen and unseen, 24 hours each day that the camps are in session," Reed stressed.

The first motto adopted by Garaywa many years ago was, simply, "Missions," Reed said. "Anyone who comes through those gates - they're our mission."

For more information on summer 2018 at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center, visit www.garaywa.com. Contact: Jordan East at jeast@garaywa.com. Telephone: (601) 924-7034.



PRECISION COUNTS - Men from North Oxford Church and First Church, Oxford, prepare a parking lot repair May 7 behind Patterson Place lodge at Garaywa Camp and Conference Center in Clinton. Camp Manager Roddy Reed (adjusting leveler) said volunteers are crucial to prepping the facility, owned by the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, for the upcoming weeks of summer camp for young girls. (Photo by William H Perkins Jr.)

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Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story; along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330 E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

MC

cont. from p. 1

and lasting influence that Dr. and Mrs. Royce have had on the university and surrounding community," said Jonathan Randle, an MC graduate serving as dean of the school of humanities and social sciences.

"To realize that Mississippi and civic leaders were equally as thankful as students, faculty, and staff was a significant insight into the Royces' faithful service," Randle said. "It speaks to their leadership beyond the boundaries of the Clinton campus."

Frazier said, "MC and the State of Mississippi are better because of the hard work and dedication of Dr. Royce. He is respected by everyone whose life he has touched."

Royce, age 66, announced his retirement prior to a trustee meeting on Aug. 17 of last year, saying he appreciated the board's "great and continuing support and encouragement to remain in service" and that leading the

university had been the greatest honor of his life.

"[T]he time has come for new, younger, more energetic leadership to guide the institution towards its bicentennial in 2026" as one of America's oldest Baptist colleges, Royce said at the time.

During Royce's administration, MC's enrollment has climbed from 3,200 to nearly 5,200 in 2018, including more than 300 at the college's law school in downtown Jackson. There were just nine international students when Royce arrived in 2002; now more than 300 students from nearly 40 nations are enrolled at the college.

Royce, a Miami native, came to MC from seven years as president of Anderson University in South Carolina. He holds doctorate, master's, and undergraduate degrees from Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

The Royce Medical Science Center, a 22,000-square foot facility which opened in 2014, includes 4,800-square-foot anatomy/cadaver lab, histology lab, lecture halls, additional re-

search space, and faculty offices for the college's master of medical science program that trains students for medical and dental schools or medical research.

The Rhoda Royce Prayer Garden, outside Alumni Hall and near Provine Chapel on the Clinton campus, was rededicated in her honor in March. The 35-by-35-foot garden, which opened in 2014, includes fountains, seating, and sidewalks provided by an anonymous donor.

Rhoda Royce, a former editor with LifeWay Christian Resources, has been an adjunct instructor of business communications at MC and was involved with MC students in daily tutoring of Clinton children at a nearby apartment complex for more than a decade.

The Royces, married since 1975, intend to retire near their son Mark, who is a college teacher in northern Virginia.



ROYCE

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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MARCH

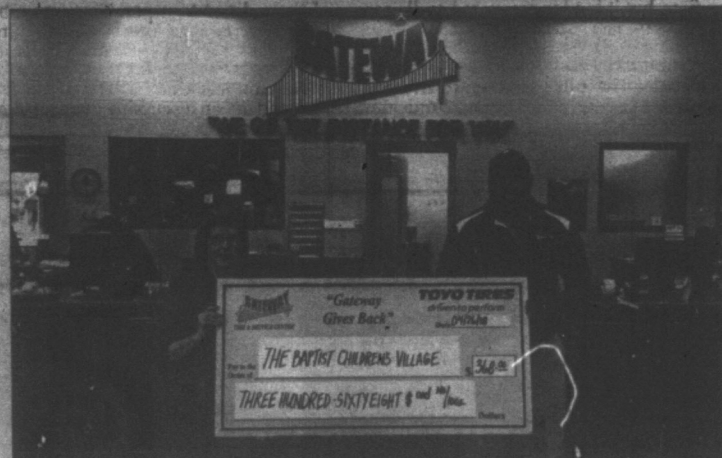
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Becoming New • 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; 6:1-2

The presenter at a recent deaf revival pulled together some incredible graphics to capture the attention of those gathered. One particular drawing showed a massive eye, welling up with a tear. The eye's pupil portrayed a far-off reflection of a hapless young man making his way toward the person with the tearful eye. This deaf pastor then relayed the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), whose father's eyes were surely blinded by tears of rejoicing. His wayward son had returned home, and this called for a celebration!

Of course, the goal of that Scripture portion is to help us realize our heavenly Father's tender love and longing for those who've strayed, and the eager embrace awaiting one who comes "home." In this same chapter, Jesus told of two other lost items — a sheep and a coin. Both were of such value to the owner that they were sought diligently until they were found, and returned to their rightful place. And in each story, a time of rejoicing follows.

This week's lesson from 2 Corinthians 5 and 6 focuses on reconciliation. You'll see variations of this key term sprinkled throughout our verses, revealing the heartbeat of the gospel. Paul begins by pointing out the necessity of viewing people through spiritual eyes, not "according to the flesh" (vs. 16). The apos-

tle's view of Jesus was drastically altered after being introduced to the risen Savior in a startling way on the Damascus road (Acts 9). Where he previously saw Jesus as a threat to the Jewish religion, Paul came to know Him in a living, spiritual relationship as his sovereign Lord. As we look at those around us through Spirit-enlightened eyes, we need to see each as a precious soul Jesus longs to reconcile to Himself.

And when this reconciliation takes place, the person becomes "a new creation." Not a patched-up version of the old, not an improved version of the former self...no, the "old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (vs. 17 NKJV). And Paul firmly reminds his readers that this is all God's doing (vs. 18): He has done the reconciling, and He then commissions the recipients of His redeeming love to reach others. We've received the "ministry of reconciliation" (vs. 18) and the "word of reconciliation" (vs. 19). Christ-followers have a ministry and

a message to share! He uses the word "ambassadors" to describe our role. An ambassador communicates the mind and plans of one person to another who isn't cognizant of it. A skilled ambassador also seeks to impress on the uninformed party the value of accepting the plan or receiving the generous gestures of the one who sent him or her; hence, this word-picture aptly describes our responsibility as Christ's ambassadors.

Verse 21, to me, has always been one of the deepest in all Scripture. Read it slowly, and consider its ramifications: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Think of that: God made His sinless, perfect Son to "be sin" for us! Why? So that we could shed our "filthy rags" of despicable self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6); and be clothed with the righteousness of God Himself! What an exchange, wouldn't you say?

Paul then references an Old Testament prophet's message (see Isaiah

49:8). In that verse, the "day of salvation" referred to a time when God would restore the nation of Israel. Paul relates that Old Testament concept of deliverance to the New Testament gospel. He tells the Corinthians not to take this wondrous message lightly (2 Corinthians 6:1), and urges them to consider that the time is now to accept and share this glorious message (vs. 2).

Addressing His disciples, Jesus said "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2). The same applies today. More people than ever before desperately need the Gospel, but the number of believers willing to share it is infinitesimal in comparison. In chapter five of his book, "I Will: Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian," Thom Rainer shares and expands upon four action steps to nudge us out of our comfort zone: "Pray for opportunities," "Invite people to church," "Intentionally look for opportunities," and "Be prepared to speak when the opportunity arises." He recommends using the "Three Circles Life Conversation Guide" for a simple presentation (this resource can be found online). Large harvest, few harvesters? Jesus calls us to change that!

Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Explore the Bible

with Ann Maniscalco

Stand With Humility • Esther 5:1-14

"Fight fire with fire" can actually be an effective tactic in putting out literal fires, but it is a lousy way to handle conflict. In fact, such tactics can worsen a situation. We've surely seen stories of road rage escalating between two people. The Bible calls us to live with kindness and humility, even in dealing with conflict. Esther modeled just such Christlike behavior in her plan to expose injustice.

Esther 5:1-8: Take the initiative and act with humility.

Esther has finished up three days of fasting, and now she entered into the presence of the king. She hadn't been with him in over a month, but he was pleased to see her. He extended his scepter to her, recognizing that she had a big request to ask of him. He went as far as to offer her up to half of his kingdom.

This showed extraordinary faith on the part of Esther. She knew the Jews were on the verge of being wiped out, and it would be determined by whether or not the king honored her request. She humbly approached the king.

Her request was simple, although it was full of the possibility of danger and failure. She informed the king that she had prepared a banquet, and wanted just him and the sleazy prime minister Haman to come.

So the king pulled himself together, summoned Haman, and the three of them dined together. This was a big deal, since Persian kings were very protective of their wives — Haman normally wouldn't have been invited.

Haman was excited. Here were the king and queen discussing a private matter in his presence! He had to feel like he was something special, and he was a man of colossal ego anyway. This just made him more cocky.

Then Esther told the king that she had more to tell him, but now wasn't the time. She told Ahasuerus that she wanted to have a second banquet, and at that time make her request. This probably wasn't because she was afraid. More likely, her women's intuition dictated that this wasn't the best time to drop that bombshell on the king, that his prime minister was unspeakably wicked and treasonous. She acted humbly before the king, and it's evidence of her humility that the king responded as he did. The cruel king accepted this delay graciously.

Esther 5:9-14: Pride brings no satisfaction.

Haman was ticked to death. Here he was, basking in the good fortune of being with the king and queen. But the thrill didn't last long. He went ballistic when he saw the Jew Mordecai refusing to bow before him.

Still, this doesn't stop Haman from strutting. He talked about his friends, his wife, his sons — he is all too grate-

ful to sell himself and how wonderful he was. After all, the king had promoted him to one of the highest positions in the land —

he deserved all the acclaim he was receiving, at least in his own mind.

Pride is a cripple. Proverbs 16:18-19 deals with this: "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly of spirit with the humble than to divide plunder with the proud" (HCS).

Yet Haman's fleshly victories did not temper his feelings toward Mordecai. They didn't satisfy him. He

couldn't get over the fact that Mordecai wouldn't bow to him. Haman displayed just how small and petty he really was. He hated the Jews, and they were personified in Mordecai. Malice took root in Haman. He's so mad, he's blinded. He couldn't even enjoy talking about how wonderful he is.

This explains partially why Esther wanted to bide her time in making her request to the king. In the meantime, Haman took poor counsel from his wife Zeresh and his friends. They suggested that he build a gallows seventy-five feet tall for Mordecai to be executed upon. Haman's plan was to have Mordecai killed in a visible place, so that there would be no question as to who is in charge ... and that he could get pretty much whatever he wanted. He wanted to use the execution as a warning to the Jews.

Pride brought no satisfaction to Haman. Instead, his plans were to execute Mordecai with the thought that this would satisfy him. There is a bitter irony here, in that we'll soon see that the gallows will end up being the instrument of Haman's own death. Pride kills.

Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.



Bible Studies for Life

with Tony Martin

SWBTS

cont. from p. 1

Patterson has also had to answer for a 2014 speech in which he referred to a minor female as "fine" and "built." Those comments, along with his au-

diotaped opinions on domestic abuse, have led more than 1,900 Southern Baptist women to call for his resignation in an online petition drive (www.swbtsletter.com).

"We are shocked by the video that has surfaced showing Dr.

Paige Patterson objectify a teenage girl and then suggest this as behavior that is biblical. We are further grieved by the dangerous and unwise counsel given by Dr. Patterson to women in abusive situations," states the women's petition to SWBTS trustees.

"His recent remarks of clarification do not repudiate his unwise counsel in the past; nor has he offered explanation or repentance for inappropriate comments regarding a teenage girl, the unbiblical teaching he offered on the biblical meaning of wom-

anhood in that objectification, and the inappropriate nature of his own observations of her body," the petition further states.

William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record, contributed to this article.

Christian-themed 'Like Arrows' latest Kendrick film

LITTLE ROCK, Ar. (BP and local reports) — Filmmaker Alex Kendrick has directed or produced five films during his career, but none had the challenges brought by his latest one, *Like Arrows*.

The film, shown in select theaters last week with DVD release later this year, follows the life of a married couple for 50 years as they experience the ups and downs of parenting.

Moviegoers will see the couple getting engaged, then having their first child followed by more children, and eventually seeing that first child off to college. Along the way, the couple learn the errors in their parenting strategy and opt to have a Christ-centered home.

The film ends with their 50th wedding anniversary.

"We had never done anything that covers that kind of time span before," said Kendrick, the director whose Christian-themed credits include *Flywheel*, *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, and *War Room*.

The majority of the movies were produced in cooperation with Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., pastored by Mississippi native Michael Catt.

Like Arrows is being released by FamilyLife, a longstanding family ministry based in Little Rock, Ar. Alex Kendrick and his brother Stephen serve as executive producers alongside FamilyLife's Dennis and Barbara Rainey and Bob Lepine. Kevin Peeples is the director.

The film is part of a new FamilyLife parenting initiative, Art of Parenting, which will include free online videos.

A movie trailer, ticket information, and Art of Parenting resources are available at familylife.com.

The Baptist Messenger of Oklahoma spoke with Alex Kendrick. Following is a transcript, edited for clarity:

Q: Tell us about the title, *Like Arrows*. The film also references arrows throughout the story.

A: In the book of [Psalms], it talks about how children are like arrows in a man's quiver, and blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. A craftsman crafting an arrow wants it to be sharp, wants it to be straight, wants it to fly where he's aiming.

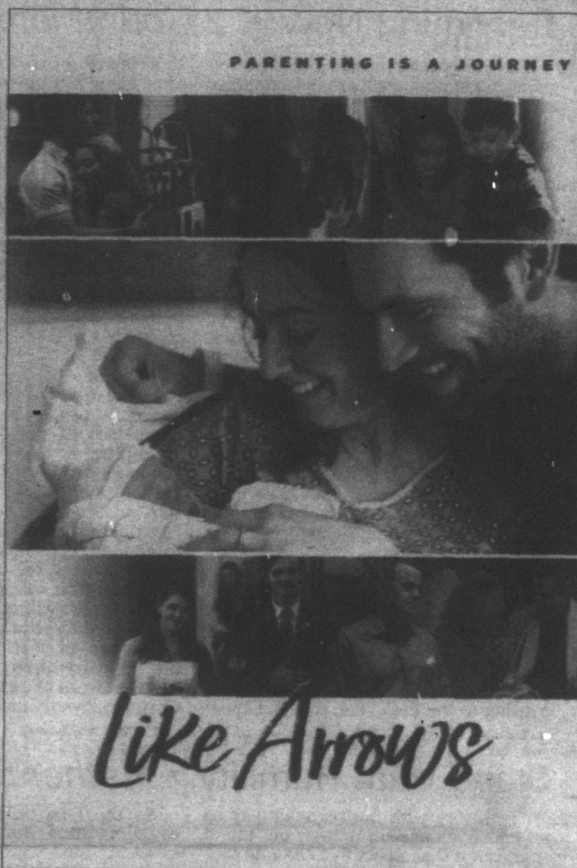
An arrow goes much further than a warrior can go, and an arrow can accomplish more at a distance than a warrior can, and in many ways that's what we're doing as parents. We're shooting our arrows into a future generation that we may not see.

Q: The theme of redemption and grace is prominent in the film, as we see several characters recover from mistakes. The parents get pregnant out of wedlock, the father later regrets being too focused on his work, and so forth. Why was the theme of grace and redemption so important?

A: There are no perfect parents and neither are there perfect children and families in this culture, and this young couple in the film that goes into parenting defaults to what the world teaches about parenting and they begin going down that path and using the world's principles for their first child or two, and they begin to realize that — wow — this is not bearing the fruit we had hoped. When they begin applying biblical principles, you see a marked difference but it doesn't mean that there's no hope for your first children, and so they learn in the film even though their first child turns out to be a prodigal that you still love, you still pray, you still hope.

Q: This film spans 50 years in the lives of the parents. Was that challenging or even exciting to tackle as a filmmaker?

A: It was a daunting task. We had never done anything that covers that kind of time span before, so we talked back and forth about: Do you need the same actors for every section or can we can we recast certain sections? Of course, you have to recast kids as they grow, but we were able to use the same couple up until the 50th anniversary, and of course by then you'd have to have a different actor and actress that would be appropriate for that age. It's easy to follow and it turned out to be a very interesting and enjoyable journey of filmmaking for us.



New books seek to answer many basic SBC questions

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Who runs the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)? The simple answer is: You do.

That's how the authors of a new book, *SBC FAQs: A Ready Reference*, emphasize the vital role that individual Southern Baptists have in the life of their convention.

Keith Harper, senior professor of Baptist studies at Southeastern Seminary (SEBTS), and Amy Whitfield, SEBTS director of marketing and communications, seek to explain how the 173-year-old convention operates through a series of questions and answers.

Knowing that many Southern Baptist church members lack a general understanding of the purpose and practices of the convention, Harper and Whitfield wrote *SBC FAQs* to bring awareness to how the SBC operates and remind readers that individuals have a voice and are vital to its decision-making process.

"They can't use their voice if they don't know it exists," said Whitfield, noting that a lack of understanding can lead to a lack of participation. For Whitfield, the idea for the book stemmed in part from attending the SBC annual meeting for the first time in 2006.

"When I went to my first Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, I was enthralled at the whole thing, but entering into it was not easy not knowing how it worked," she said.

Whitfield had two groups of people in mind as she co-wrote the book — the younger generation of students in college and seminary who are supported



by the Cooperative Program yet may not understand how the SBC operates, and pastors who need a simple resource to inform their congregation of the denomination.

"We're in a season where we are wanting to see more and more people get engaged in the process, and information is really important for engagement," Whitfield said.

Why are there many Southern Baptists



who do not understand their own convention? "If they don't get it, it's because we don't market it that way," said Harper, explaining that the promotion of the convention is the responsibility of different entities with multiple roles and perspectives. As a result, the SBC can feel "fragmented" despite the rich history of the convention.

While Harper and Whitfield seek to bring awareness by providing the what

and how of the SBC one question at a time, Scott Hildreth, the George Liele director of the Lewis A. Drummond Center for Great Commission Studies at SEBTS, provides the why in *Together on God's Mission: How Southern Baptists Cooperate to Fulfill the Great Commission*.

Hildreth sets forth the reason behind the Cooperative Program (CP), emphasizing the biblical, theological, historical, and practical basis for the SBC's primary funding mechanism.

"It's true that we can do more together than we can do apart, but that's not why we do it," Hildreth said. "We do it because God's mission is a global mission that establishes a global people who together accomplish God's mission."

When Hildreth thought about his primary audience for the book, he wanted to write it for people like his dad, his dad's pastor, and seminary students.

With a theological framework to back up the CP, Hildreth believes it's hard to make a case against the biblical basis for churches cooperating together to further God's mission in the world.

"I think that a church that operates independently has to ask themselves the question, 'Am I actually obeying the Lord if I'm being independent?'"

Hildreth said he, Harper, and Whitfield are "trying to advocate a vision that's compelling enough to the pastor so he advocates [CP] to his laypeople."

SBC FAQs and *Together on God's Mission* are both available at amazon.com and lifeway.com.